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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 14 August 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 13 August 1996, from His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, addressed to you.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 13 August 1996 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the recent violent incidents caused by Greek Cypriot demonstrators carrying Greek flags along and inside the buffer zone in Cyprus on Sunday, 11 August. As you are well aware, the said demonstrations resulted in bloodshed and damage to property, as well as aggravating the existing mistrust between the two communities and damaging prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus dispute.

Well in advance of the incidents, the Turkish Cypriot side had issued repeated warnings regarding the unforseen consequences of such provocative behaviour. Appeals and representations were also made to the Greek Cypriot side by concerned third parties, including the United Nations, to do all it could to stop those demonstrations. In spite of a last-minute announcement by Mr. Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, that the planned demonstration of the Greek Cypriot motorcyclists had been cancelled, upon your personal intervention, incidents occurred along and inside the buffer zone. They involved violations of the buffer zone, stone-throwing at the Turkish Cypriot side, setting several areas on fire and other provocative behaviour. As a result of the clashes that occurred, one person lost his life and scores of people were injured.

The responsibility for this unfortunate outcome rests solely with the Greek Cypriot leadership, which not only condoned but also actively supported these demonstrations from the beginning. Had this not been so, during the months-long period preceding the demonstrations, when the intentions of the would-be demonstrators had been made abundantly clear, the Greek Cypriot administration could have put in place serious and effective measures which would have prevented the incidents from escalating into violence. This is confirmed in a statement to the press made by your Deputy Special Representative in Cyprus, Mr. Gustave Feissel, after his meeting with the Greek Cypriot officials on 12 August 1996, in which he said: "If the government side had done its job completely and effectively these people would never be in the buffer zone in the first place." Instead, the behaviour of the Greek Cypriot leadership, official, political and religious alike, in so far as the demonstrations were concerned, ranged from one of encouragement to connivance to outright support.

When, for instance, a group of motorcyclists set out from Berlin, at the beginning of August, arrangements were made by the Greek Cypriot administration to facilitate its journey across Europe. The Greek Cypriot missions in Prague and Vienna hosted the group while a months-long fundraising campaign was launched to help finance the journey.

The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, which has aided and abetted the demonstrators from the beginning, has contributed tens of thousands of dollars towards the funding of the demonstrations. It also bears particular responsibility for exhorting the demonstrators to action by its anti-Turkish, inflammatory rhetoric.

However, the ultimate responsibility for the outcome of the demonstrations rests with the Greek Cypriot administration. Only a few days before the incidents, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, as the head of the Greek Cypriot administration, did not hesitate to give a clear message of support to the planned action of the motorcyclists by posing to the press on a motorcycle. In the light of this, Mr. Clerides' last-minute intervention announcing the cancellation of the demonstrations appeared as a half-hearted, insincere action, and a face-saving device vis-à-vis the outside world. In the final analysis, it probably made matters even worse by angering the demonstrators and contributing to the violence. The failure of the Greek Cypriot police, on the other hand, to take the necessary measures on time and its passive attitude during the course of the demonstrations played a major role in the escalation of the incidents into violence.

The irresponsible attitude of the Greek Cypriot administration throughout this whole affair has drawn sharp criticism even from the Greek Cypriot press, as illustrated by the following extract from the English-language daily, Cyprus Mail, dated 13 August 1996:

> "The Government's handling of the whole matter has been naive, indecisive and indefensibly irresponsible. It was another case of too little being done too late."

By contrast, the attitude of the Turkish Cypriot officials, from President to the policeman in the field, has been one of moderation and restraint. When Mr. Clerides had finally declared that the demonstration of the motorcyclists had been cancelled, President Denktaş even thanked him publicly, only to learn a short while later that the provocations were continuing and had escalated into violence. Upon learning that a Greek Cypriot had lost his life in the incidents, Mr. Denktaş expressed his regret and offered his condolences to the family of the deceased. Pointing out that there is now a greater need for dialogue and a peaceful solution, he called on Mr. Clerides to agree to meet with him without further delay, to explore how confidence can be established between the two communities and a comprehensive settlement can be reached.

The reaction of the Turkish Cypriot civilians towards the Greek Cypriot demonstrators, on the other hand, must be regarded in the context of our people's determination to defend their borders against aggression, their outrage at this assault on their existence and integrity as an equal people in Cyprus and their refusal to be turned into refugees for the second, third or even fourth time in recent decades by allowing the demonstrators to rehearse how they could ultimately overrun the North. The Greek Cypriot side must realize that every action produces a reaction and that they must bear the responsibility for the consequences of their own provocative actions.

The incidents have again demonstrated, in no unclear terms, the vital necessity of preserving the effective guarantee of Turkey as a deterrent against the recurrence of Greek aggression against the Turkish Cypriots. As President Denktaş also pointed out in the course of the incidents, if the Greek Cypriots are capable of causing so much disturbance and violence while the Turkish troops are present in the North, it is not difficult to imagine what they would do without this presence.

The latest developments have also shown, beyond the shadow of any doubt, that Cyprus is now reaping the bitter fruits of decades of agitation by the Greek Cypriots, in collaboration with Greece, to take over the whole of Cyprus and turn it into a Greek island. Their continuing massive campaign of rearmament, in the context of the "joint defence doctrine" with Greece, their provocative activities, inflammatory rhetoric and harmful propaganda, coupled with a refusal to sit at the negotiating table,have taken their toll on the already inimical relations between the two communities. We therefore call on the Greek Cypriot side once again to respond positively to President Denktaş's constructive offer for direct dialogue before the current trend becomes chronic and perhaps even irreversible.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of
Northern Cyprus